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WORKING-CLASS EDUCATION IN NINETEENTH-CENTURY MANCHESTER: THE MANCHESTER FREE SCHOOL

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‘THE WELL-KNOWN Free School, admirably managed, controlled and instructed, and which has conferred on Manchester pre-eminent benefits’.¹ In these glowing terms H. E. Brodie, Her Majesty’s Inspector of Schools, described the Manchester Free School in 1870.

Founded in 1854 by the members of the National Public School Association (formerly the Lancashire Public School Association) at the instigation of Richard Cobden, it was originally intended as a model of the type of school that they would have liked to establish all over the country under a scheme of national education.^(a) For this reason the school was originally named ‘The Manchester Model Secular School’.

The L.P.S.A., founded in 1847, could boast close associations with the Anti-Corn Law League, among which were a common birthplace in the vestry of the Rev. Dr. William McKerrow’s Lloyd Street Presbyterian Chapel in Manchester, and the membership of ‘Leaguers’ such as Samuel Lucas, Jacob Bright, Dr. McKerrow, Thomas Ballantyne and Alexander Ireland.² In 1850 Lucas managed to persuade Richard Cobden, now recovered from his exhausting fight for free trade on behalf of the League, to resume the struggle for national education, in which he had been engaged in the 1830s, and become the leader of the L.P.S.A. Cobden had not found the problems associated with national education easy to solve and, in his own words:

took to the repeal of the Corn Laws as light amusement compared with the difficult task of inducing the priests of all denominations to agree to suffer the people to be educated.³

With its leadership in the capable hands of a national figure, the L.P.S.A., renamed the National Public School Association, organised a campaign for free, rate-supported, locally-controlled secular education on a national scale. Unsuccessful attempts were made to get an act into Parliament in order to implement these principles, but despite their lack of success, the Association gave great publicity to the deficiency of existing educational provision under the system whereby the Government subsidised elementary schools established by voluntary societies.^(b) By so doing they made a valuable contribution to creating the climate

(a) There was one difference between the schools envisaged in the original plan and the Model School; only boys were admitted, whereas the Association envisaged co-educational schools if their scheme had been put into effect.

(b) The most important of these were the National Society, which was an Anglican body, and the British and Foreign Schools Society which, although originally non-denominational, was mainly supported by Nonconformists. The N.P.S.A. produced statistics to show that large numbers of children who did not belong to any religious denomination never went to school at all, and that in poor neighbourhoods where local initiative was weak the provision of schools was completely inadequate. On these grounds they condemned the voluntary system.

of public opinion which made possible the passing of the Elementary Education Act of 1870. When, in 1853, Lord John Russell introduced his 'Borough Bill' into Parliament, the N.P.S.A., disappointed at his proposal to allow education to remain in the hands of the voluntary societies, immediately sent a deputation to persuade him to adopt their plan for a national system. Herein lay the germ of the Model Secular School, for in his reply Russell suggested that before he could adopt their scheme he would need more evidence of its practicability. Immediately the Executive Committee of the N.P.S.A. decided to provide this evidence by opening a school of their own in 1854.

The foundation of the Model Secular School

The most energetic promoter of the school was R. M. Shipman,⁴ an immigrant to Manchester from Hinckley in Leicestershire. He illustrates the way in which nineteenth-century Manchester was deeply indebted to people from other parts of the country for raising the quality of the town's social and cultural amenities, for not only was he a member of the Executive Committee of the N.P.S.A. but also a director of the Athenaeum and chairman of the Unitarian Home Missionary Board. During 1853 he contacted several people unofficially, but was helped mostly by Cobden's willingness to meet any members of the N.P.S.A. who were interested in the project, on his next visit to Manchester.⁵

The outcome was a meeting held on October 21 attended by Cobden, Dr. McKerrow, Shipman and several other eminent Mancunians at which they decided to establish the Model Secular School. The expenses of the first few years were guaranteed, a provisional committee was appointed and steps were taken to obtain suitable premises. A committee of management was elected by subscribers on July 5, 1854 and, after making certain private enquiries, the newly elected body advertised for a headmaster.

Surely no group of prospective headmasters has ever been more thoroughly scrutinised. Not only were the applicants themselves examined, but their schools also, for the committee members, undeterred by the distances involved, scoured the country in search of the ideal man. The fact that they found him, in the person of Benjamin Templar, as far away as Bridport in Dorset is a measure of the zeal with which they performed their task.

The building chosen to house the school is described in the *First Report of the Manchester Model Secular School*, of March, 1855:

The principal school room is a lofty, well-lighted and ventilated hall, of about fifty feet square, with a gallery extending across one end, having six convenient class-rooms, opening into the principal room. The suite is capable of accommodating above three hundred scholars.

It belonged to the Society of Friends and stood at the corner of Jackson's Row and Deansgate within its own burial ground, opposite the present site of the Manchester Education Committee building. When Deansgate was widened in 1876 the school was taken down. The Friends moved to another building in

Byrom Street and the school, by then known as the Manchester Free School, moved to St. Peter's Sunday School, situated in Hewitt Street, behind the railway arches of Knott Mill railway station. At the time of writing (1966) this building is still standing, the first floor now occupied by a printing firm and the top floor having had the distinction of being, until recently, the rehearsal room of the Hallé Concerts Society.

The development of the school's ethos

The committee of management were very fortunate in their choice of Benjamin Templar as the first headmaster; the school's success was largely due to his ability both as a teacher and an organiser. From the beginning he selected his pupils with the greatest of care. One might wonder what choice there was for him to make in view of the fact that the school was in one of the poorest areas of the town and that the available pupils were of the type commonly described in those charitable days as 'gutter' children. He was, in fact, anxious to avoid any exploitation of the free education given at the school. The following qualifications were required before a boy could gain admission:

Honest poverty in the parents, and probability that the applicants will attend school regularly, and for sufficient time to render real advantage from the instruction possible.⁶

The curriculum was designed to prepare the boys for life and work in an industrial society. It consisted of reading, writing, arithmetic, grammar, original composition, geography, physical science, drawing, human physiology, political economy, social ethics, 'and the uses and properties of "common things"'.

It is interesting to note the content of what Benjamin Templar described as 'the more important subjects'. These included 'common things' which consisted of tracing raw material 'from its origin in the animal, vegetable and mineral kingdoms . . . to its ultimate uses'; instruction on the 'organic laws, as operating in material creation concerning the ascertained natural causes of disease and poverty, of health and wealth; concerning moral obligation and its ultimate relation to individual and social happiness or misery'; and practical morality.⁷

The last named subject was considered to be most important being used as a substitute for religious instruction which had no place in a secular institution as it involved reading the Bible. It was feared that if the Bible were used, even as a history book without any doctrinal bias, it would have excluded the children of some religious sects, notably the Roman Catholics, from taking advantage of the benefits offered by the school. Lessons in practical morality, however, could offend nobody's conscience and by this means Templar hoped to inculcate 'a love of truth, honesty, temperance, cleanliness, diligence, punctuality and order; obedience and love of parents, respect for teachers and kindness to each other'.⁸ The success of such a venture is not easy to ascertain but the Headmaster was of the opinion that the beneficial results of such training could be seen in the personal appearance of the boys 'who have begun to feel the pleasure consequent upon

cleanly habits, and by the daily practice of them, show a feeling of self respect to which previously they were strangers'.⁹ The lessons in physiology included the study of the process of mastication and digestion and paid special attention to the most 'nutritive kinds of food'. This must have been particularly valuable to the pupils of the Model School who, without exception, came from poor homes where little would be known about food values.

In Templar's opinion, however, by far the most important subject studied was social economy. This, he believed, was the discipline most relevant to the conditions of an industrial society, for it made the pupils 'in some degree conversant with the conditions of industrial success . . . and with the circumstances that determine the value of labour', and 'supplied them with some correct principles and motives for their guidance in future industrial and commercial life'.¹⁰ In this way the Model School pupils, unlike the majority of children in the same social class, were given some elementary instruction to enable them to cope with the industrial environment of mid-nineteenth-century Manchester.

One of the most important contributions to the school's ethos was the method of maintaining discipline. Corporal punishment was completely abandoned, much to the astonishment of some of the visitors who came to inspect this remarkable institution. As the report for March 1855 explains:

It is dispensed with as being less powerful for purposes of discipline and control than other means, and as destructive of the master's moral influence over the boys.¹¹

This was particularly impressive, one is reminded by the report, in view of the fact that:

The class of boys attending are the most unlikely possible it may be supposed, for government by 'moral suasion' and 'the power of gentleness', but the master has the best reason to be satisfied with the results of his treatment in this respect.¹²

The idea of punishment was subdued and the boys were taught to regard discipline not as a punishment, but as part of the training necessary for their individual correction and welfare.

Although this was a remarkable feature of the school, particularly when the impoverished nature of the locality is taken into consideration, its effect on visitors was mild in comparison with their reaction to the attendance record, which never failed to evoke expressions of fulsome praise from H.M. Inspectors, bishops and distinguished citizens alike. In 1856 the average attendance was 95 per cent¹³ which was good to say the least, but by 1875 it had reached a figure of 96.5 per cent. In 1879, when he distributed the prizes at the annual examination, the Bishop of Manchester described the record as:

. . . unparalleled in the history of elementary education being nearly 30 per cent above the average attendance at pay schools.^(a) ¹⁴

This was not achieved without some effort on the part of the Headmaster who made it his responsibility to visit the parents of offending pupils and explain to

(a) By 'pay schools' the Bishop was referring to the normal type of elementary school where fees were paid.

them the necessity of regular attendance. If after two warnings they persisted in their irregularity the boys were dismissed. The second warning always took the form of a long letter and illustrated the difficulty Templar had in driving home the importance of regular attendance to parents who, having had little or no education themselves, failed to appreciate its necessity. The letter ended with the following admonition:

‘Nothing less than *serious sickness*, or other pressing necessity, should be considered a sufficient excuse for keeping your son at home. I hope you will, for your son’s sake, consider these things, and for the future send him very regularly. If no improvement takes place, *he must be dismissed*, and make room for another who will attend regularly.’¹⁵

It is a tribute to Templar and his staff that this stringent policy could be enforced, for the attendance of boys of the same social class at other schools was most unsatisfactory. It appears, therefore, that the parents of the Model School pupils genuinely appreciated the value of the instruction given to their children and were ready to go to considerable lengths to enable them to take advantage of it.

Benjamin Templar and the teaching of social economy

William Ellis, founder of the Birkbeck Schools in London and benefactor of the Model Secular School, can be given most of the credit for popularising the teaching of social economy in elementary schools. His motives for so doing are most interesting. A Manager of the Indemnity Marine Assurance Company at the age of twenty-eight, he was naturally interested in the ‘subject of wages, panics, strikes, currency, banking and similar problems of commercial and social life’, and became convinced that if only the working-classes could be informed about the principles of ‘commercial and social phenomena’ a great deal of social distress would be alleviated. With this end in view he set about teaching social economy to children in the hope that the knowledge might enable them to ‘understand their own position in society and their duties towards it’.¹⁶

In the hands of Benjamin Templar the new branch of knowledge quickly became the most important subject taught at the school. A man of great ability and first-class teacher Templar was highly regarded as an authority on education. This is illustrated by the fact that he presented papers on various aspects of education at three Social Science Congresses. At the Liverpool Congress of 1858 he read a paper entitled *The Importance of Teaching Social Economy in Elementary Schools* in which he made a strong case for including it in the elementary school curriculum.

As a subject, he argued, its two main virtues were the utility of the information and its suitability for purposes of education. The information was useful for not only did it teach the working man to make his labour as remunerative as possible and to spend its proceeds wisely, but also ‘that a man’s remuneration would depend on the quantity and quality of his work which will bear exact proportion to his industry, knowledge and skill’. He also believed that it taught ‘the conditions of industrial success’ against which nothing militated more than strikes

and trade unions. These, as far as Templar was concerned, were influences detrimental to the well-being not only of his pupils but to industrial society as a whole, as the following extract illustrates:

Now it is evident that it will be the utmost importance, not only to themselves (the pupils) and to their families, but also to the interests of trade, and therefore of society in general, that before such time comes, they should be sufficiently well informed to resist such overtures (to go on strike) and, if possible, expose the fallacies by which they are supported . . . when so instructed and not till then, will they see that since trade combinations cannot alter the conditions upon which the value of their labour depends, they cannot permanently alter wages.¹⁷

There is no doubt that the Headmaster of the Model School was a disciple of Utilitarian economic philosophy and, as such, filled the minds of his pupils with middle-class propaganda. Working-class leaders complained bitterly of the teaching of similar 'Malthusian' theories in the Mechanics' Institutions and in Manchester Rowland Detrosier led a breakaway movement from the main body, aiming to establish an institution governed entirely by and in the interests of working-class people.¹⁸ Nevertheless, although Templar might be condemned for what in present-day circumstances would be considered to be an abuse of his position of authority, he must be excused on the grounds of his sincerity and firm conviction that he was showing his pupils where their best interests lay.

The factors that made the subject so eminently suitable for educational purposes were what Templar described as its religious, moral and intellectual character. It was a religious subject 'because none can reflect upon its teachings without having their veneration for and gratitude and love towards God strongly excited'. It was moral, because it taught that the conditions of industrial success depended on the possession of 'a good moral character, a well deserved reputation for honesty, truthfulness, industry, sobriety, and punctuality'.¹⁹ As for its intellectual qualities: 'what a fine extensive field for the exercise of the *perceptive* and *reflective* faculties is afforded by a careful consideration of the advantages that arise from a division of labour, commerce, the uses of money and credit, the production of wealth. . . .'²⁰

He was convinced that as a subject social economy was of greater value to the children of the working classes than grammar, 'while as a means of education it is almost infinitely superior'. He would not go so far as to advocate the subject to the exclusion of grammar, 'but', he said, 'I *do* advocate the necessity for letting it have precedence of that subject'.²¹ By modern standards the confusion of ethics and morality with social economy as taught by Templar is inexcusable. However, the emphasis on morality was an important contribution to the ethos of the school and as such was considered to be an indispensable part of the training for life which the pupils received.

In addition to receiving lessons in social economy certain selected pupils were given instruction in phonography, free of charge, by Henry Pitman, brother of Sir Isaac Pitman, and reporter for the *Manchester Examiner and Times*. However, a very important part of the vocational teaching that went on in the school was

devoted to the training of pupil teachers. One of the main difficulties faced by elementary schools, particularly the progressive establishments, during the nineteenth century was the problem of finding suitable teachers.²² This made it necessary for Headmasters to train their own staffs if they wished to maintain adequate standards and even more so if they wished to teach subjects beyond the conventional scope of the three Rs. Benjamin Templar's training programme for his pupil teachers was most rigorous, as the following extract illustrates:

They are well acquainted with the highest branches of arithmetic, with algebra and with the first four books of Euclid, with English History and the structure of the English Language. . . . They have learnt thoroughly the Geography of all parts of the world and are so well up in this subject as to be able to draw from memory, well executed maps, not only of every continent but of nearly every country also. Besides this they have made sufficient progress in Vocal Music and Drawing to find and give pleasure in them, and they have so far advanced in Latin as to be able to translate 'Caesar'. In addition to this they have for years past received instruction in Physical Science, and in the important principles of Political Economy.²³

This diffuse type of training came under heavy criticism from Charles Dickens in *Hard Times*. He considered that teachers attempted to absorb in a superficial manner a tremendous amount of useless information. More recently Asher Tropp in his book *The Schoolteachers* took a far more sympathetic view. Describing their 'fierce desire to acquire knowledge', he wrote:

The large numbers of teachers who did succeed in educating themselves in the full sense of the word is a tribute not to the pupil teacher system but to the pupil teachers and teachers themselves.²⁴

One feels that the Model Secular School was making a serious attempt to satisfy this voracious appetite for knowledge.

Idealism overcome by expediency

As its name implies the Model Secular School excluded doctrinal religious teaching from the curriculum and the use of the Bible was forbidden. This policy complied with the N.P.S.A. principle that any system of national education would have to be confined to secular instruction, otherwise there would always be the danger of violating the consciences of a large number of pupils. However, the mundane matter of finance forced the managers to compromise with their idealism.

In February 1856, prompted by Richard Cobden, the school committee applied to the Committee of Council on Education for the right to be inspected and to participate in the Parliamentary grant. The request was turned down on the grounds that the school did not provide 'instruction in revealed religion'. This led to many recriminations against the policy of the Committee of Council, but despite two further appeals, the money was not forthcoming. As a library, a playground and improved sanitary arrangements had been provided for the school in 1855, the average annual subscription of some £390 was proving to be

inadequate. When, therefore, the annual meeting for 1860 was held, the school's financial position was the main topic of discussion and the possibility of introducing Bible-reading was seriously considered, but not until another year had elapsed was any action taken. Consequently at the annual meeting on September 18, 1861, the Committee decided to close the school for a time:

... but in confident hope that it may be re-established in compliance with the condition of reading a small portion of Scripture daily, rather than turn 350 poor children into the streets. They do it under strong protest, as a matter of hard necessity, and not because they have changed their opinion as to what schools ought to be and eventually must be.²⁵

The statement illustrates how the conception of the school had changed in the minds of the members of the Committee of Management. Originally it had been a factor in the N.P.S.A.'s campaign for free, secular education. The Association were intent on proving the need for free schools and on disproving the allegation, frequently made by the opponents of free education, that if no fees were demanded parents would consider the instruction worthless and would refuse to allow their children to attend. However, as the school developed, they became deeply conscious of the social service that they were providing for deprived children, believing that education was one of the main weapons available to society in the fight against crime. Consequently we find H. J. Leppoc, the Treasurer, writing in the report for 1861:

It is the duty of the State to educate before punishing the ignorant for crime committed, and so in some measure to prevent it.²⁶

The secular principle was thus sacrificed in the interests of the pupils and the political expedient became the social aspiration.

On being reopened, the school was renamed the Manchester Free School and there was considerable apprehension of possible repercussions as a result of the introduction of Bible-reading into the curriculum. It had been expected that the parents of the Roman Catholic children, in particular, would have raised objections to the new policy. That they did not was due entirely to the skilful handling of the matter by Benjamin Templar, who, having failed to reach any satisfactory agreement with the Roman Catholic canon, called a meeting of some thirty Catholic parents and read to them portions of scriptures selected for school use. Their comments were most favourable and they resolved to continue to send their children to the school. In the event only one Catholic family withdrew a child, despite several such intimations prior to the meeting.

The importance of the episode lies in the lack of interest by working-class parents in the kind of religious teaching that went on in a school, provided that the secular instruction was adequate. While Parliamentarians argued over rights of conscience and religious pressure-groups attempted to maintain their vested interest, working-class parents were mainly concerned with obtaining secular education for their children, regardless of what sort of religious instruction went

on in schools. Benjamin Templar referred to this in his paper on *The Religious Difficulty in Education* (1858):

Knowing what I do of the wishes of parents concerning education, I cannot help feeling that all the clamour that is being made about giving Biblical instruction in the day-schools is a noisy mistake. . . . Of my certain knowledge, I can assert that parents do *not* care to have their children religiously taught in the day schools; . . . and in many cases their *sole* object in sending them to the day-school is that they may get good secular instruction.²⁷

The American Civil War; the Revised Code and after

The early 1860s were uncomfortable years for many people living in Manchester as a result of the dislocation in the cotton trade caused by the American Civil War. The attendance at the school, however, did not suffer. On the contrary:

The applications for admission during the year have been very numerous and urgent; hence the school has been unprecedentedly full, as many as 364 have been present out of 380.²⁸

From his first-hand knowledge of the conditions under which the children lived Benjamin Templar was able to describe, in the *Eighth Report* of the Free School for September 1864, how boys often came to school barefoot in the severest weather, having eaten neither breakfast nor dinner. As a result of the generosity of some of the school's promoters he was able to help several families into gifts of food and clothing.

The tenth year of the school's existence, 1864, was the first in which it benefited from the Revised Code and for a period the financial pressure was relieved. Nevertheless, the Treasurer was constantly obliged to ask for further financial aid from the school's supporters. In the same year, having, over a period of ten years, given the school a character entirely of its own, Benjamin Templar resigned in order to become Headmaster of a 'middle-class' school in Cheetham Hill, Manchester. He was succeeded by George Mellor, who first appeared as a member of the staff in 1861. He continued the work begun by Templar and was still in charge of the school in 1887, which is the last record that the writer has found. After this date it can be presumed that the school was absorbed by the Manchester Board of Education.

Matthew Arnold condemned the Revised Code²⁹ in that it had the effect of limiting the curriculum to the teaching of the three pay subjects, reading, writing and arithmetic, but the Free School managers were at pains to contradict any such impression:

So far as this school is concerned, these fears have not been realised. Time is still found for Grammar, Geography, History, Physical Science and Social Economy; and that the teaching of these does not interfere with the three 'paying subjects', as they are called, is shown by the remarkable fact . . . that 99 per cent of the boys have passed in these subjects.³⁰

Nevertheless the Code does appear to have had some adverse effect on the extremely liberal curriculum, for the later reports made no references to the

teaching of social economy and physiology. Despite this, however, the excellent standards of the school in examinations and attendance were maintained and the reports of H.M. Inspectors remained fulsome in their praise. Its reputation spread widely beyond Manchester, and among the distinguished people who visited it were Miss Davenport Hill and her sister Florence (daughters of Sir Rowland Hill), the Hon. Lyulph Stanley of the London School Board, Joseph Lupton of the Leeds School Board, Sir John Pakington, M.P., the Dean of Hereford and many others.

After the Elementary Education Act of 1870 the financial difficulties of the school's first ten years began to re-appear. The number of pupils began to decrease as they were absorbed by other schools under the reorganisation of the Manchester School Board, and by 1880 the deficit had reached £343 9s. 8½d.³¹ One of the main reasons for this situation was that by 1880 most of the original benefactors of the school had died.

A contemporary critique of the school

Despite the deficit the school continued to function until at least 1887. In that year James Newbold, a member of the Manchester School Board, published a critique of the Free School entitled *The Case of the Manchester Free School: No Argument for Universal Free Schools*. He was moved to publish this, it appears, because of the adverse criticism directed at other schools in the town in the light of the Free School's success. He had himself taught in one of these less favoured establishments and was at pains to defend their teachers and bring to light the difficulties with which they had to contend. In so doing he shed much light on the unique circumstances which had enabled the Free School to be so successful.

Whilst admitting that it was a remarkable establishment he showed how it would be impossible for all schools to have the same privileges. The Committee of Management he alleged was unique in that it consisted of:

a band of men distinguished above their fellows even in a city which has been long famous for the enlightened educational zeal of its leading citizens.³²

For example Richard Cobden, Thomas Bazley, R. N. Phillips and William Brown were at some time in their careers Members of Parliament. Sir John Potter, besides being an M.P. shared with Ivie Mackie the distinction of being three times Mayor of Manchester; Elkanah Armytage and Joseph Whitworth both received knighthoods and the latter founded the Whitworth Scholarships. Dr. John Watts was some-time president of the Manchester Statistical Society and W. B. Hodgson eventually became Professor of Political Economy at Edinburgh University. Dr. J. R. Beard was a leading Unitarian, E. R. Langworthy founded the Langworthy Scholarships and Langworthy Art Gallery and H. J. Leppoc later became chairman of the Board of Guardians. As if that were not enough, Newbold maintained, they chose successively two first-class Headmasters in Benjamin Templar and George Mellor to conduct their school.

Newbold was severely critical of the school's attendance record which, he

alleged, was only maintained by a process of rigorous selection. Any pupil who could not attend regularly had to forfeit his place in the school. The managers had made regularity into 'an idol, converted it into a Juggernaut. . . . The Free School regularity is an artificial creation, and as such offers no criterion of what is possible in ordinary circumstances'.³³

He was also very critical of those who, in the light of the success of the Free School, argued that if all school fees were abolished educational problems would disappear. This, he said, was false logic; an example of *post hoc ergo propter hoc*. In support he quoted the difficulties experienced by the Manchester Education Aid Society whose members had paid the school fees of several poor children in the town, only to see them gradually melt away from the schools to which they had been sent. The need to pay school fees, therefore, was not the main cause of poor attendance records.

Newbold was on firm ground here, for despite the excellent attendance records of the Free School, Templar himself had become convinced of the need for coercion of parents into sending their children to school, and in 1866 had read a paper to the National Association for the Progress of Social Science, entitled *Ten Years Experience of the Manchester Free School*. In it he complained of the obstinate refusal of many parents to send their children to school when they could easily have afforded the necessary fees if only they had been willing to forego some of the money spent on beer, spirits and tobacco, and concluded:

At these times I have felt it a matter of deep regret that there was no strong arm of the law to reach the parents and compel them not only to *send* their children to school, but to *keep* them there regularly.

In contrast with the praise of H.M. Inspectors' reports it is fascinating to read Newbold's more sceptical views. Yet despite these criticisms there is no doubt that, throughout its existence, the Free School was one of the most remarkable educational establishments not only in Manchester but for miles around. The school did not prove to be a prototype for others and its peculiar successes were due to privileges of management and direction which could not be repeated in other schools. Nevertheless its tremendous social and educational contribution cannot be minimised. For over thirty years it gave to poor boys, who would otherwise have been neglected, an education designed to be relevant to the unpleasant task of living in an industrial society and in so doing provided a worthy monument to the work and aspirations of the founders of the Lancashire Public School Association.

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